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Financing of the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone

Proposed revised budget for the period from 1 July 2004 to 30 June 2005 of the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone

Report of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions

Proposal submitted by the Secretary-General for 2004/05	$291,603,600
Recommendation of the Advisory Committee for 2004/05	$291,603,600

1. **The Advisory Committee recommends approval of the full amount proposed by the Secretary-General for UNAMSIL for the period from 1 July 2004 to 30 June 2005.**

2. The documents used by the Advisory Committee in its consideration of the financing of UNAMSIL are listed at the end of the present report. The report also incorporates the comments and observations of the Committee following its visit to the Mission from 1 to 4 June 2004.

I. Introduction

3. The United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL) was established by the Security Council in its resolution 1270 (1999) of 22 October 1999 for an initial period of six months. The mandate of the Mission was subsequently extended through successive Security Council resolutions until 30 September 2004. By its resolution 1492 (2003) of 18 July 2003, the Security Council endorsed a plan for the drawdown of UNAMSIL according to the "modified status quo" option envisaging the complete withdrawal of troops by December 2004, as recommended by the Secretary-General in his report of 23 June 2003 (S/2003/663). A revised drawdown plan with a more gradual reduction in the military and police strength of UNAMSIL, proposed by the Secretary-General in his report of 19 March 2004 (S/2004/228) was

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approved by the Security Council in its resolution 1537 (2004) of 30 March 2004. Recognizing the necessity for further strengthening of the capacity of the Sierra Leone police and armed forces to maintain security and stability effectively, as indicated in the Secretary-General's twenty-third report on UNAMSIL (S/2004/724), of 10 September 2004, the Security Council, by its resolution 1562 (2004) of 17 September 2004, extended the mandate of UNAMSIL for a further nine months, until 30 June 2005.

4. The drawdown timetable described in the Secretary-General's twenty-second report on UNAMSIL (S/2004/526), of 6 July 2004, remains on track and it is planned that by the end of December 2004 the number of troops will be reduced from 11,500 to approximately 5,000, with some 1,500 military personnel providing logistical support and a seamless transition to the Mission's residual presence. By the end of February 2005, it is expected that the force strength will be reduced to 3,250 troops and 141 United Nations military observers. The civilian staff will be reduced concomitantly.

II. Information on performance for the current period

5. The Advisory Committee was informed that, as at 31 August 2004, a total of $2,625.1 million had been assessed on Member States in respect of the Mission since its inception. Payments received as at that date amounted to $2,489.1 million, leaving an outstanding balance of $136.0 million. As at 20 September 2004, the cash position of the Mission was $223.5 million and the unliquidated obligations for the period from 1 July 2002 to 30 June 2003 amounted to $55.9 million.

6. The Advisory Committee was informed that troop and formed police cost reimbursement up to 30 April 2004 totalled $51,483,000, while the amount owed for the period from 1 May 2004 to 31 August 2005 was $46,588,000. With regard to contingent-owned equipment, the Committee was informed that as at 31 August 2004, an amount of $55,435,000 had been reimbursed and the estimated amount owed was $859,000, while unliquidated obligations totalled $35,531,000. In respect of death and disability compensation, $4,235,650 had been paid as at 31 August, 2004 for 99 claims; 14 claims were pending and unliquidated obligations amounted to $15,883,000.

7. **The Committee commends the Mission on its well-managed cash position and notes with appreciation that all of the 69 memorandums of understanding have been signed. It calls upon Headquarters to replicate these good practices in other missions.**

8. The Advisory Committee was informed that the delayed deployment factor as at 31 August 2004 was 12 per cent for military observers, 18 per cent for military contingents and 22 per cent for civilian police, and that the vacancy rate was 17 per cent for international staff, 6 per cent for national staff and 14 per cent for United Nations Volunteers.

III. Proposed revised budget for the period from 1 July 2004 to 30 June 2005

9. The initial budget for the operations of UNAMSIL for the period from 1 July 2004 to 30 June 2005 amounted to $196,982,200,[1] based on the drawdown plan envisaging a complete withdrawal of troops by December 2004.

10. The revised resource requirements for the period from 1 July 2004 to 30 June 2005 amount to $291,603,600, an increase of $94,621,400 or 48 per cent over the initial apportionment (see A/59/286). This revised amount encompasses $143,428,200 for military and police personnel, $50,413,100 for civilian personnel and $97,762,300 for operational costs, respective increases of 29, 46 and 90 per cent, with air transportation accounting for 70 per cent of the increase in operational costs.

11. As indicated in paragraph 4 above, the revised budget provides for the scaling down of the Mission to 5,320 troops by December 2004 and subsequently from 1 January 2005 for an initial period of six months to a residual presence with a ceiling of 3,250 troops, 141 military observers and 80 civilian police personnel.

12. Civilian personnel will also be reduced, initially down to 1,003 posts, comprising 330 international staff, 534 national staff and 139 United Nations Volunteers by December 2004, and further to a total of 849 posts, comprising 266 international staff, 486 national staff and 97 United Nations Volunteers by 30 April 2005.

A. Activities of the Mission related to liquidation

13. In its report on the financial performance report for the period from 1 July 2002 to 30 June 2003 and the proposed budget for the period from 1 July 2004 to 30 June 2005 (A/58/759/Add.3) the Advisory Committee noted that property write-off was not proceeding as well as could be expected, especially at the downsizing stage of the Mission. It urged UNAMSIL to pay increased attention to the write-off and disposal process and to ensure that those tasks were accomplished in full compliance with the financial rules and procedures of the Organization.

14. The Committee was informed that following a thorough review of the asset write-off and disposal process, an Assets Disposal Group and an Asset Disposal and Environmental Protection Unit were established. The first is responsible for resolving outstanding issues related to asset write-offs and disposal, whereas the second ensures that all United Nations and contingent-owned assets are disposed of in an environmentally friendly manner and that the Sierra Leone local authorities issue a certificate of clearance indemnifying the Mission from environmental liabilities in the areas evacuated. The lessons learned and experience acquired have been integrated into guidelines, developed in close cooperation with the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), for the environmentally friendly disposal of assets, which will become part of the standards applied by the Department of Peacekeeping Operations in all missions.

[1] Recommended by the Advisory Committee and approved by the General Assembly in its resolution 58/308 of 18 June 2004.

15. The Committee understands that, at the end of February 2004, an assets surplus of $40 million to be transferred to the United Nations Logistics Base or other missions had been identified. It was informed that following the steps taken to dispose of most of the written-off assets, there were 2,140 assets pending disposal and 839 assets in the process of being written off as at 31 August 2004. **The Committee commends UNAMSIL for the progress made in this area.**

B. Military and police personnel

Category	*Approved 2004/05*	*Revised 2004/05*		*Incumbency*[a]
Military observers	260	260		229
Military contingent[b]	10 399	9 800	31 Jul. 2004	8 476
		5 320	31 Dec. 2004	
		3 250	31 Mar. 2005	

[a] As at 31 August 2004.
[b] Based on scheduled deployment.

16. The schedule of troop repatriation is established in close concert with contributing countries, allowing for a certain flexibility with respect to actual departure dates. Drawdown of military and police personnel is proceeding in accordance with the adjustment drawdown and withdrawal plan. The Committee was informed that the Mission plans to close 22 camps/team sites and repatriate 4,440 military personnel, while conducting rotations for 2,125 military personnel, within the next three months.

17. The Committee notes that with the decrease in the number of troops, the levels of the Force Commander and Deputy Force Commander have been downgraded from ASG to D-2 and from D-2 to D-1, respectively.

C. Civilian personnel

Category	*Approved 2004/05*	*Revised 2004/05*[a]		*Incumbency*[b]
International staff	335	335	31 Jul. 2004	277
		330	31 Oct. 2004	
		320	31 Jan. 2005	
		265	30 Apr. 2005	
National staff	556	556	31 Jul. 2004	526
		534	31 Oct. 2004	
		556	31 Jan. 2005	
		486	30 Apr. 2005	
United Nations Volunteers	147	147	31 Jul. 2004	126
		139	31 Oct. 2004	
		131	31 Jan. 2005	
		97	30 Apr. 2005	
Total	1 038	1 038	31 Jul. 2004	929
		1 003	31 Oct. 2004	
		1 007	31 Jan. 2005	
		848	30 Apr. 2005	

[a] Based on scheduled deployment.
[b] As at 31 August 2004.

18. The implementation of the adjustment drawdown and withdrawal plan has created considerable additional tasks for the administrative component of the mission. For example, the movement of a battalion from its existing location to the port of departure for repatriation takes approximately one month, requiring numerous activities such as the clean-up of existing camp sites/locations, transportation of all contingent-owned equipment and military personnel to the transit camps by road or air, maintenance and extension of transit camps, and transportation of contingent-owned equipment and military personnel to the ports for departure.

19. The Advisory Committee is concerned that the requirement for multiple peacekeeping operations in the region, with the consequent competition for experienced mission staff, together with the downsizing of UNAMSIL, have precipitated an erosion of experienced staff away from UNAMSIL at a crucial point in its operation. It is an important principle that sufficient experienced staff should be retained in a mission that is downsizing to deal with assets disposal and the handover of programmes to the Government and other entities in the country, as well as to properly document lessons learned. **The Committee understands the urgency entailed in setting up new peacekeeping operations and the career development concerns of the staff assigned to missions which are winding up; however, it strongly recommends that the Department of Peacekeeping Operations assign greater priority to ensuring that adequate numbers of experienced staff are available to carry out winding up activities efficiently and effectively and that guidelines be established to strengthen existing lessons-learned efforts.**

20. **The Committee welcomes the efforts made to align the grade levels of a variety of posts to the reduced workload of the downsized mission.**

D. Operational costs

1. Training

21. **The Committee notes the extensive training programmes available to the staff of this downsizing mission; some courses attended seem to be more suited to the start-up phase of peacekeeping missions. In certain cases, the training is conducted in Geneva, New York or Brindisi, undoubtedly entailing additional travel costs. It is the Committee's opinion that the training programmes offered should be related to the operational needs of the downsized Mission; the Committee requests the Mission to make a careful assessment of the training needed by staff to accomplish their tasks. In this connection, it understands that training programmes for strengthening the capacity of national staff may be planned and executed at all stages of a mission, including and especially in the downsizing phase.**

22. **Moreover, the Committee recognizes that the question of staff training is also a broader, cross-cutting issue that cannot be resolved at the level of a particular mission. It should be addressed in an integrated manner, with a systematic recording of the training programmes attended by each staff member, on the one hand to ensure that staff members do not undergo the same training multiple times and on the other to facilitate search for specific skills. The Committee has requested the Department of Peacekeeping Operations to prepare proposals for an in-depth discussion on all matters related to staff training in February 2005.**

2. Transportation

23. The Committee underlines the importance of monitoring the ratio of vehicles to the number of personnel with a view to maximizing cost savings, especially during the downsizing phase of operations.

24. The Committee was informed that the increases in transportation costs, especially air transportation, are due to the increased number of aircraft in operation. This is to some extent attributable to the new safety policy of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations which prohibits travel of passengers on cargo helicopters, but also, in part, to the increased activity related to troop repatriation and the impossibility of ground access to many areas during the rainy season. To comply with this policy, the Mission has received four new MI-8 helicopters for carrying passengers and repatriated one MI-26 helicopter, with a net annual increase in operating costs of $6.9 million.

3. Standard ratios

25. **The Committee commends the Mission for applying ratios based on real, mission-tested costs, deviating from institutional standards, and thereby producing a more realistic budget and avoiding overbudgeting.** For example, the requirement for petrol, oil and lubricants was established based on the effective local price of $0.33 instead of the standard benchmark price of $0.5, as well as on a more realistic estimate of the consumption of fuel per vehicle per day. The Committee requests the Department of Peacekeeping Operations to extend this practice to other missions.

E. Cooperation

26. The Committee noted the widespread cooperation, on a day-to-day basis, between UNAMSIL and the other United Nations peacekeeping missions in Western Africa, namely the United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire (ONUCI) and the United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL) in areas relating to administration and logistics, training, military operations, political and civilian affairs, civilian police operations, human rights and child protection, humanitarian affairs and public information. As the oldest mission in the region, and having acquired expertise and experience, UNAMSIL is able to provide support to the other missions, particularly in the start-up phase.

27. For example, in the area of administration and logistics, the three missions have assisted each other by sharing critical equipment, aircraft and specialized staff and extending medical assistance. With regard to civilian police operations, UNAMSIL sent a civilian police officer for a two-week assessment mission to Liberia, provided material on training, organized a workshop and set up mechanisms for joint planning and sharing of information concerning cross-border security issues. Discussions on areas of common interest, such as planning for the return of refugees or lessons learned on child protection, take place regularly. UNAMSIL has also assisted in the preparation of workshops and provided briefings in the areas of humanitarian affairs and human rights to the military leadership prior to their deployment in Liberia.

28. Among the formal links instituted are meetings between the Special Representatives of the Secretary-General, which provide a forum for assessing political and security developments in the subregion, and quarterly meetings

between the three Force Commanders, which are coordinated by an interregional secretariat.

29. On the military front, links have been established between staff officers at various levels and regular exchanges of information and assessments take place. UNAMSIL and UNAMIL have exchanged Liaison Officers, jointly patrol the border with Liberia and review the threat on a daily basis. The Committee was informed that the missions are also working closely together on the crucial issue of the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of ex-combatants, which was initially targeted for completion by March 2004. The continuing presence of some 800 ex-combatants in Côte d'Ivoire and Liberia is considered to be a potential source of danger and destabilization, not only for Sierra Leone, but for the region. The Committee urges the Mission to pursue this matter diligently.

30. There is also extensive cooperation between the Mission and agencies in the area. The Advisory Committee was pleased to note the spirit of cooperation among the entities involved in the Sierra Leone country team and the sense that was conveyed of a common goal. The agencies are already working hand in hand in such areas as resettlement of displaced persons, refugees, disarmament, demobilization and reintegration, child protection, small arms, immunization campaigns, youth and jobs for youth, and are poised to take over many UNAMSIL programmes once the Mission withdraws. The Committee was informed that the World Bank, for example, had committed itself to a three-year plan for the development of infrastructure at $70 million per year. However, funding, in general, is scarce; the Committee was informed that the recent United Nations inter-agency appeal yielded only 10 per cent of the funding goal of $60 million.

31. During the visit of the Advisory Committee, the country team expressed its recognition that the needs for recovery and the transition to sustainable development in Sierra Leone go well beyond the means of any individual agency and called for multi-dimensional partnerships with the Government, the United Nations, United Nations agencies and other humanitarian and development partners. The Committee was informed that at the beginning stages of international involvement in Sierra Leone, emergency funding was plentiful for non-governmental organizations, which began to initiate generous projects. After UNAMSIL was established, emergency funding for non-governmental organizations dried up to some extent and the organizations began to close down activities and withdraw from Sierra Leone, causing some social tension and disruption of services. **The Committee stresses that the exit strategy should be smooth and, to that end, it should be coordinated by UNAMSIL and involve all concerned agencies and non-governmental organizations, as well as the Government.**

32. With regard to the Special Court for Sierra Leone, the Committee notes with interest the extent of current cooperation, and encourages the Mission to further strengthen its collaboration with the Court to the extent possible during the remainder of the Mission's mandate. In December 2002, a memorandum of understanding was signed clarifying the terms of cooperation between the Court and UNAMSIL. It was reported to the Committee that UNAMSIL support had been crucial in the field of security and that the Court continued to depend on UNAMSIL helicopter assets for the movement of personnel to and from the interior of the country to conduct investigations, visits to witnesses and outreach programmes. UNAMSIL also provided other logistical support to the Court on a reimbursable basis. In the opinion of the Committee, greater effort could have been made to

create joint services in areas such as personnel, information technology, finance and procurement to avoid the establishment of separate units within the Court.

F. Quick-impact projects

33. While in Sierra Leone, the Advisory Committee visited the sites of two quick-impact projects involving the building of schools by Ghanaian military personnel. In the Committee's view, these projects, which are modest in scope and cost, are useful, not only for the communities concerned, but also because of the good public relations they foster among all participants. Furthermore, they give an additional constructive task to military contingents. In this connection, the Committee notes that the projects it visited had been under implementation during the downsizing phase, rather than in the start-up phase, as was envisaged in the report of the Panel on United Nations Peace Operations (the Brahimi report) (see A/55/305-S/2000/809, para. 47 (a)).

34. It is the view of this Committee that quick-impact projects could be useful beyond the initial stages of a mission when they contribute to the implementation of the mission's mandate by fostering good relations between the military contingents and the local population. Care must be taken, however, to avoid bureaucratization, as the advantage of these projects lies in the flexibility with which they are planned and implemented, as well as their low cost. The experience with these projects should be sufficient, at this point, to draw educated lessons.

35. **The Committee therefore recommends that the General Assembly consider the issue with a view to extending the funding for quick-impact projects beyond the initial stages of missions. To assist this consideration, the Committee further recommends that the Secretariat work towards developing a model that would draw on lessons learned and that would not involve the establishment of rigid financial arrangements, which could render such projects more costly and impede their quick implementation.**

Radio UNAMSIL

36. One entity that bears special mention following the Committee's visit to the Mission is Radio UNAMSIL. Its coverage includes most of the country and it is, in fact, the first national broadcasting medium, providing the people with unbiased reporting and an outlet for voicing opinion through its many phone-in programmes. Radio UNAMSIL also broadcasts targeted radio programmes, such as the Voice of Children, which is currently airing 12 programmes on three radio stations nationwide, with some 200 children involved as producers, presenters and researchers. The Committee understands that Radio UNAMSIL was instrumental in galvanizing the people for the elections and expects that it will continue to play an important role as UNAMSIL draws down and the Special Court begins its trial phase.

IV. Conclusions of the Advisory Committee

37. The action to be taken by the General Assembly in connection with the financing of UNAMSIL for the period 1 July 2004 to 30 June 2005 is indicated in paragraph 25 of the revised budget (A/59/286). **Taking into account its comments above, the Advisory Committee recommends that the Assembly approve the Secretary-General's proposals.**

Documentation

- Revised budget for the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone for the period from 1 July 2004 to 30 June 2005 (A/59/286)
- Security Council resolution 1537 (2004) of 30 March 2004
- Security Council resolution 1562 (2004) of 17 September 2004
- General Assembly resolution 58/308 of 18 June 2004